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Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary

Channel Islands National Park and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary launched the festivities of their 25th anniversaries in the “From Shore to Sea” lecture series by featuring speakers who have made significant contributions in protecting the resources of the park and sanctuary. The series kicked off with a presentation by Channel Islands National Park superintendent Russell Galipeau entitled “Protecting Biological Diversity – The Role of the National Park Service.” The 2005 lecture series was free and open to the public and was expanded to include lectures in Santa Barbara as well as Ventura.

In response to a Coast Guard request for assistance, the sanctuary staff responded to a January 14 report of an alleged oil spill from Platform Holly, operating off Coal Oil Point, California (Coal Point is along the California mainland, just north of the University of California Santa Barbara campus, which is well outside of the sanctuary’s boundaries.). On arrival at the incident site, the sanctuary staff took oil samples to determine the source of the oil. The samples are currently out for analysis. Based on the response team’s observations on site, the incident at this time appears to have been caused by natural seepage, not platform operations. The area offshore of Coal Oil Point is the second largest natural oil and gas seep field in the world. Seep activity was very high during the team’s reconnaissance, and natural slicks were widespread in the area. At the current time, this incident appears to be unrelated to oiled birds washing up along the California Coast between Ventura and Santa Monica. Based on oil fingerprint analysis, it is currently believed that the source of these southern mainland oil slicks is seepage from old upland oil wells inland of Ventura during the recent heavy rainstorms.

Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary

Fresh tarballs up to 20cm in diameter are being found on Bay Area beaches from Point Reyes National Seashore in the north, ranging south into the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Special beach surveys are being conducted by sanctuary staff and by Beach Watch monitoring volunteers. Extreme spring tides and high storm surf have limited the extent to which many beaches could be surveyed. No oiled wildlife has been reported in the Gulf of the Farallones, but Monterey sanctuary’s Beach COMBERS found 8 oiled common murrelets. The tarballs are being sent to the Office of Spill Prevention and Response for analysis to determine the source of the oiling. The analysis is expected next week.

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

On the afternoon of January 14th, 2004, two local fishing charter boat captains reported the release of jet fuel by a military aircraft overhead in the vicinity of Western Sambo, off Boca Chica Naval Air Station (NAS). One of

the two captains and his vessel were actually doused with jet fuel as a result of the incident. After inquiries by sanctuary staff, the Navy confirmed that one of their KC-135 refueling aircraft had to make an emergency landing at Key West NAS because it lost power in one engine. The aircraft dumped approximately 50,000 lbs. of fuel, at an altitude of 3,000 feet, before it landed at air station. The aircraft was on the last leg of the landing pattern, traveling west to east on its approach. This information has been forwarded to NOAA HAZMAT in Seattle, which will run trajectory and dispersal models. Sanctuary staff will attempt to investigate the area to determine any resource damage.

Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary

The sanctuary met with the Habitat Protection Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council in Baton Rouge, LA, on January 12. Staff recommended 15 banks in the northwestern Gulf of Mexico for designation as Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPC) and Coral Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). The recommendations were based on recent mapping, research and exploratory surveys supported by the sanctuary, NOAA's Office of Ocean Exploration, and the Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service. Among the motions passed by the Council and forwarded to the DOC for approval were the following:

Fifteen banks in the northwest Gulf to be designated as HAPC's, with boundaries recommended by the sanctuary. No specific regulations are carried with this designation, but special consideration is given to these areas during the development of regional fisheries management plans.

Three banks containing coral reefs (East and West Flower Gardens and McGrail Bank), and Stetson Bank to be designated as Coral EFH, with boundaries recommended by the sanctuary. The Council passed a motion to adopt fishing restrictions in the Coral EFH areas: prohibit anchoring, trawling, bottom longlines, and buoy and trap/pot gear.

The three banks in the sanctuary are already protected from bottom impacts through sanctuary regulations. McGrail Bank, 53nm to the east, however, is not so protected. The sanctuary has documented up to 30% coral cover in some locations on this bank. The designation of Coral EFH through the HAPC process is a necessary step for protection of this unique coral reef ecosystem.

Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary

On December 31st, sanctuary staff responded to a call for support by NOAA Fisheries in the disentanglement efforts on a juvenile endangered right whale. The sanctuary took two vessels to the site and provided the platform from which the disentanglement took place. The whale had first been sighted entangled and trailing a marker buoy on December 6. The animal was successfully disentangled on December 31, while sanctuary staff was on scene 40

miles offshore.

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary

NOAA's Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary Kihei office site was the host for an event on January 9, celebrating the revitalization of the 1600-year old Royal Fishpond adjacent to the sanctuary. A crowd of more than 200 supporters, dignitaries and guests gathered for ceremonies and speeches. Guest speakers included Congressman Ed Case; Peter Young, chairman of the board of the state Department of Land and Natural Resources; Allen Tom, regional coordinator of the National Marine Sanctuary Program; Rob Parsons, Maui Mayor Alan Arakawa's environmental coordinator and Kimokeo Kapahulehua, president of the fishpond association. A canoe landing by the Kihei Canoe Club was followed by blessings and ceremonial chants by the Warriors of Lahaina. Media coverage included a color feature in the Honolulu Advertiser, the color cover of the Maui News, Maui Weekly, Lahaina News, Haleakala Times, and television news from Honolulu ABC, NBC, CBS and FOX Stations.

On January 15, 2005, sanctuary staff helped to coordinate a multi-agency response to the live stranding of a mother and calf pygmy sperm whale, which were beached in rough surf just over a mile from the sanctuary's Kihei, Maui site. Sanctuary staff and a visiting NOAA Fisheries' biologist coordinated the onsite efforts to stabilize and assess the situation. The mother and calf were brought together and held by volunteers in order to prevent their rolling in the surf. After consultation with veterinarians over the phone, the animals were carefully transported to the Hawaiian fishpond adjacent to the sanctuary site so that they could be held in calmer waters into the night, and until the arrival of the veterinarian from Oahu. Sanctuary staff organized the volunteers and logistics for a possible overnight vigil (e.g. lights, food, warm cloth, etc.). Based on advice from the NOAA Fisheries coordinator and the veterinarian from the Hawaiian Islands Stranding Response Group, it was unanimously decided that the only humane course of action was to euthanize the animals. Pygmy sperm whales are offshore, deep-water animals, with a very poor record of recovery from stranding situations. A full necropsy was performed on the female at the sanctuary site the following day. Sanctuary volunteers and the public were allowed to view the process with interpretation provided by sanctuary educational staff. Some of the agencies involved included: NOAA Fisheries PIRO, NOAA Sanctuaries HIHWNMS, NOAA OLE, USCG (Maui), Hawaii State DLNR (DOCARE and DAR), Maui Police Department, Hawaiian Islands Stranding Response Group, Maui Ocean Center, Fishpond Association of Maui, and Hawaii Wildlife Fund.

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

On January 6, a sanctuary staffer spoke to a group of 60 environmental law professors from around the country regarding the National Marine Sanctuar-

ies Act and the National Marine Sanctuary Program, presenting the highlights of Monterey Bay sanctuary. The presentation was part of a panel discussion organized by the American Association of Law Schools focusing on ocean and coastal law and management.

Sanctuary staff delivered a presentation in Long Beach, California, on January 11 to the state's Blue Ribbon Task Force, a group that oversees the renewed effort to design marine reserves in state waters under the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA). The presentation provided a brief overview on California sanctuaries and the efforts of sanctuaries related to marine reserves, and the complementary nature of sanctuary and state goals. The discussion also focused on opportunities for coordination between the ongoing sanctuary workgroup effort to carry out the sanctuary Special Marine Protect Area Action Plan and the state's MLPA pilot project, which is to begin on the Central Coast in the spring.

The sanctuary's submerged cultural resources website has been revised and updated, incorporating descriptions of submerged cultural resources, responsibilities and mandates, resource protection challenges, recent research and inventories, the Maritime Heritage Program, the maritime heritage action plan, historic images and MBNMS partners and links. To view the new website, see <http://montereybay.noaa.gov/resourcepro/resmanissues/culturalres.html>

Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve and Proposed Sanctuary

January 31- Feb 4, the NWHI national marine sanctuary designation process will be featured on the Classroom Exploration of the Oceans 2005, an online virtual teacher workshop. The three-part workshop has a special focus on efforts currently underway to protect and conserve special places in the ocean and explore still unknown areas of the deep ocean. The Reserve Education Coordinator will give a keynote presentation on the NWHI, and attending educators will have a week prior to the workshop to review all the materials and pose questions. There will be other presenters from Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute.

Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary

The Assistant Manager of the Olympic Coast Sanctuary contacted the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office, to request that a British Admiralty Chart note for the area to be avoided (ATBA) in the Sanctuary be corrected. The sanctuary was notified by a mariner, through their ATBA outreach program, that one of the British Admiralty Charts had an older chart note. Effective on December 1, 2002, the ATBA's designation was modified to apply to all vessels over 1600 gross tons. Prior to this it only applied to tank vessels carrying oil or hazardous materials as cargo. The sanctuary requested that the UKHO review their

chart suite for the area to ensure that the newer ATBA description was included.

Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary

The National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) program agreed to partner with the National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP) in funding the second year of the 3-year grant to the University of New Hampshire to undertake a History of Marine Animal Population (HMAP) in the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary. The University has pioneered the use of detailed historical and archival data for the reconstruction of historical fish stocks before modern fisheries science began. The NMSP had asked the University's HMAP team to apply their unique methodologies to reconstruct historical changes in marine populations and the environment in the sanctuary. This is the first time that NOAA looks at the use of such historical information to understand the history of the natural resources it is charged with managing. This is an important and innovative proposal that serves as a prototype to bring major new sources of data and historical perspectives to marine resource management and conservation.

National Marine Sanctuary Program

During the week of January 3, the National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP) participated in the 38th Annual Conference on Historical and Underwater Archaeology in York, England, hosted by the Society for Historical Archaeologists. The NMSP focused on efforts to manage U.S. maritime archaeological resources within sanctuary waters. Subjects included the use of live video links from maritime heritage resource sites direct to classrooms, and explain the advantages of this technology in teaching history, science, geography, and archaeology in an educational setting, plus a discussion of NOAA's collaboration with the U.S. Navy to search for the Navy's first submarine—*USS Alligator*. This activity highlights NOAA's work to promote stewardship and education of the nation's maritime heritage.

On January 8, the NMSP's National Education Coordinator attended the American Meteorological Society's (AMS) 4th annual Student Conference and Career Fair where she spoke about "Career Opportunities that Can Make a Difference" to over 300 undergraduate and graduate students majoring in the atmospheric sciences. Joining in presenting career opportunities in the ocean and atmospheric sciences were numerous esteemed meteorologists and professionals. The Society also presented its annual WeatherFest event, which heavily recruited participation from parents, teachers, students, and residents of the local San Diego community. Over 1,800 people attended WeatherFest, and over one hundred teachers stopped by the National Marine Sanctuary Booth to learn more about opportunities to teach ocean science education in their classrooms and communities. Participants were afforded the opportunity to view the 3-minute sanctuary video, the 30-minute Coastal


Storms video, look at sand through microscopes, and learn about educational opportunities available through national marine sanctuaries.

A staffer from the NMSP's Conservation Policy and Planning Branch completed an Embassy Science Fellowship with the American Embassy in Hanoi. During her time in Vietnam, the staffer worked with the first Marine Protected Area (MPA) in Nha Trang (South Vietnam) participating in a project review, reviewing the management plan and working with staff on an implementation plan as the project transfers over from the project staff to the MPA Management Authority. The staffer also worked on developing a proposal for designation of the Phu Quoc Archipelago (on Cambodian border) as a marine protected area, which would have transboundary implications with Cambodia and Thailand. The staffer continued work with IUCN and the Ministry of Fisheries on the North Tonkin Archipelago (North Vietnam). The staffer drafted a plan for the region identifying the priority resource management issues and incorporating the Phase I and Phase II activities into the plan that has been developed through a partnership between IUCN, NOAA and the Ministry of Fisheries, with funding from the State Department.

As the nation's oldest scientific agency, NOAA has in its care a wealth of artifacts—from 19th century maps and charts to early scientific instruments—that recall the agency's proud heritage and legacy of service to the nation. NOAA has dusted off a variety of rare treasures and placed them in a unique display that will engender the thrill of discovery. The exhibit will be at the NOAA Science Center in Silver Spring, MD, during the first annual NOAA Heritage Week, February 7-11, 2005. Conservators will be on hand to offer tips about caring for precious personal treasures and heirlooms, from old family photos to quilts, clothing, and other fabric items. "Treasures of NOAA's Ark" will be open from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. daily. Those not located in Silver Spring can experience this special exhibit at <http://preserveamerica.noaa.gov>.

A highly successful Ocean Forum co-hosted by the NMSP, The Commonwealth Club of San Francisco, Farallones Marine Sanctuary Association, and the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, was held in San Francisco on Jan. 13, 2005, with over 400 people in attendance. The Forum panelists discussed the vital role that oceans play in our lives, what steps are being initiated that impact the future of California's coasts and ocean, and how individual actions can have a profound impact on ocean health. The keynote speaker was Leon Panetta, Director, Leon and Sylvia Panetta Institute for Public Policy. Forum moderator was Michael Krasny, Host, KQED Radio "Forum". Panelists included Michael Chrisman, Secretary for Resources, State of California; John E. McCosker, Ph.D., Senior Scientist, California Academy of Sciences; Kate Wing, Ocean Policy Analyst, Natural Resources Defense Council; and Daniel J. Basta, Director, NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program.

The Philadelphia Independence Seaport Museum is creating a new exhibit display focusing on the history of the Union Navy Submarine, the Alligator.



The display will feature a scaled model of the precursor submarine that was built by the Alligator inventor in 1861. When this precursor submarine came out of the Delaware River in May 1861, it scared the local population and was promptly impounded by the local police. However, this “aquatic monster”, as it was called in the Saturday Evening Post at the time, inspired the Union Navy to build the Alligator. The museum is organizing a media campaign that includes an interview on the National Public Radio’s Morning Edition show to be taped on Thursday January 27, 2005. Staff from the NMSP have also been invited by the prestigious Cosmos Club in Washington DC, to speak about the Alligator as part of their lecture series on February 15, 2005.